

DATELINE: #96: WASHINGTON, D.C.  
ALINA ZERANSKI

JULY 7, 1976

SOUNDS OF JUBILEE

ANNCR: DATELINE: WASHINGTON, D.C. -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE,  
PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE CAPITAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
-- BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK AT  
THIS TIME. TODAY, A REPORT PREPARED BY ALINA ZERANSKI  
ON A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO MAY HAVE FOUND A SOLUTION TO  
THE HOUSING PROBLEMS IN THE INNER CITIES. YOUR REPORTER  
IS \_\_\_\_\_.

NARR: EVERY SENSIBLE PERSON LOOKING FOR A HOUSE TRIES TO  
FIND A WELL-KEPT AND PROFITABLE PROPERTY. NOT THE  
JUBILEE HOUSING CORPORATION IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THIS

SMALL GROUP OF DEEPLY RELIGIOUS INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE  
MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE CHURCH OF THE SAVIOR  
USUALLY PICK THE MOST DILAPIDATED AND PROBLEM-RIDDEN  
BUILDINGS IN A POOR NORTHEAST NEIGHBORHOOD, BUY THEM AND...  
BUT WE'RE GETTING AHEAD OF THE STORY...

THE CHURCH OF THE SAVIOR IS AN INNER CITY MISSION. ALL  
HUNDRED MEMBERS ARE MINISTERS WITH DIFFERENT MISSIONS:  
SERVING THE POOR BY IMPROVING THEIR HOUSING CONDITIONS,  
WAS THE CHOSEN MISSION OF EIGHT PERSONS WHO FORMED A  
NON-PROFIT CORPORATION. THEY NAMED IT JUBILEE HOUSING  
AFTER THE OLD BIBLICAL JUBILEE VISION OF RENOVATION AND  
RELEASE FROM DEBT, SLAVERY AND OPPRESSION.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- CRESSWELL

"JUBILEE HOUSING BEGAN WITH A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO MET FOR WORSHIP AND PRAYER IN ONE OF THE MOST RUN-DOWN, POVERTY -- STRICKEN NEIGHBORHOODS OF WASHINGTON, D.C. WE WERE CONCERNED HOW WE COULD MINISTER AND BE AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD... WE BEGAN BY JUST WALKING THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND TRYING TO DETERMINE WHICH BUILDINGS WERE MOST IN NEED, AND WE CAME UPON TWO BUILDINGS THAT WERE BACK TO BACK, WHERE NINETY FAMILIES LIVED AND OVER A HUNDRED CHILDREN, CROWDED IN MANY TIMES IN JUST INTOLERABLE CONDITIONS."

NARR: THAT WAS CAROLYN CRESSWELL, A 25-YEAR-OLD WOMAN WHO INSPIRED THIS ENTERPRISE. HAVING SOME EXPERIENCE WITH REAL ESTATE SHE DRIFTED INTO BROKERAGE. THIS LED HER ONCE TO A LOW-INCOME SECTION OF NORTHEAST WASHINGTON. SHE WAS APPALLED BY THE HOUSING CONDITIONS SHE FOUND THERE. UNABLE TO FORGET, SHE DISCUSSED IT WITH HER FELLOW PARISHIONERS. THEN, ENGAGING THE PARTNERSHIP OF HER PASTOR, USING ALL HER SAVINGS AND LONG-TERM, NO-INTEREST LOANS FROM HER FRIENDS, CAROLYN CRESSWELL PURCHASED THE MOST RUN-DOWN HOUSE SHE COULD FIND WITH THE INTENTION OF RENOVATING IT. NO LENDING INSTITUTION WOULD FINANCE WHAT SEEMED TO BE AN OBVIOUS MONEY-LOSING PROJECT. BUT CAROLYN AND HER FELLOW MISSIONARIES -- THE BUNCH OF NUTS, AS THEY WERE CALLED AT FIRST -- FORMED A CORPORATION AND SOON WERE AFTER THE MUCH LARGER ENTERPRISE OF PURCHASING TWO LARGE APARTMENT BUILDINGS.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- CRESSWELL

O.P.T. "WE BEGAN BY REALLY GOING ALMOST DAILY TO VISIT THE OWNER OF THOSE TWO BUILDINGS AND TRYING TO MAKE HIM AWARE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE BUILDINGS WITH THE PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE CHILDREN THAT LIVED THERE. THE BUILDINGS WERE VERY UNSAFE AND THE HALLWAYS WERE THE ONLY PLACE MANY OF THESE CHILDREN HAD TO PLAY...WE KEPT TALKING TO HIM,

TAPE: AND FINALLY DETERMINED THE SELLING PRICE THAT HE WOULD FIND  
(CONT) ACCEPTABLE. AND THEN WITH ABSOLUTELY NO FUNDS OF  
OUR OWN, WE WENT AND BORROWED A SMALL DOWN PAYMENT,  
TOOK IT TO THE OWNER WITH A CONTRACT THAT CALLED FOR  
600,000 DOLLARS IN CASH WITHIN SIXTY DAYS. THEN WE  
WENT BACK TO OUR SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO TOGETHER  
AMONG US PROBABLY DIDN'T HAVE SIXTY THOUSAND...AND I  
THINK JUST THE FACT THAT WE HAVE TAKEN THAT SORT OF  
RISK EVOKED A RESPONSE IN MANY, MANY PEOPLE AND EVEN-  
TUALLY A WELL KNOWN REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER CAME TO  
US AND MADE AVAILABLE THE 600,000 DOLLARS BY BORROWING  
IT PERSONALLY, AND WE PURCHASED THE BUILDINGS."

NARR: BUT NONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE JUBILEE CORPORATION HAD  
ANY EXPERIENCE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SUCH BUILDINGS.  
THEY KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THE TENANTS, THEIR NEEDS OR  
VICES. THERE WERE PLENTY OF PROBLEMS, BUT THE PARISHIONERS,  
PEOPLE FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND MANY HIGH SCHOOL KIDS  
JOINED FORCES TO HELP. THEY MADE CASH CONTRIBUTIONS,  
OFFERED THEIR TIME AND SKILLS. THE BUILDINGS WERE  
RENOVATED FOR ABOUT ONE-TENTH OF THE NORMAL COST. JANET  
COLWELL, ANOTHER CORPORATION MEMBER, IS AN ADMINISTRATOR  
WHO WORKED FOR 20 YEARS FOR A TV NETWORK. HERE SHE  
NEEDED DIFFERENT SKILLS:

TAPE: CUT THREE -- COLWELL

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T. "WE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO RENOVATE ANY OTHER WAY .  
WE HAD TO DO IT WITH VOLUNTEER WORKERS. OVER THE PAST TWO  
AND A HALF YEARS, WE HAD SOME 25,000 HOURS, MAN-HOURS  
OF VOLUNTEER LABOR PUT IN. WHEN I WENT OVER WITH NO  
SKILL, I BECAME THE CHARMAN OF THE RENTERS AND SPENT  
THE FIRST TWO MONTHS SCRUBBING DOWN THE STAIRS AND  
CLEANING THE HALLS. AS WE PICKED UP MORE SUPPORT,  
VOLUNTEER SUPPORT FROM WORKERS FROM OTHER CHURCHES, FROM  
OUR OWN MEMBERSHIP, FROM OTHER MISSION GROUPS, WE KIND OF  
ORGANIZED THE VOLUNTEERS INTO WORK PARTIES, SCHEDULED  
THEM INTO NIGHTS, AND KIND OF COORDINATED THEM."

NARR: JUDILEE HOUSING KEPT ONE APARTMENT BUILDING, BUT  
ADMINISTERS THREE -- IN TOTAL 130 LIVING UNITS, 95  
PERCENT ALREADY RENOVATED. THE RENTS ARE WELL BELOW

NARR: THE CITY AVERAGE. IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS, THE CORPORATION  
(CONT) HAS RECEIVED TWO FOUNDATION GRANTS, ONE FOR 200,000  
DOLLARS FOR LONG-TERM FINANCING OF A BUILDING, AND 25,000  
FOR SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR THE CHILDREN. THE ORIGINAL IDEA  
OF THE JUBILEE WAS TO ENGAGE THE TENANTS IN THE RENOVATION AND MANAGEMENT, BUT THE CORPORATION DIDN'T KNOW AT FIRST HOW TO GO ABOUT IT. NOW, AFTER DEMONSTRATING WHAT CAN BE DONE, THE PROJECT HAS EVOLVED INTO ORGANIZING AND SHIFTING RESPONSIBILITY AND OWNERSHIP TO THE TENANTS.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- COLWELL

"WE ARE WORKING IN BUILDINGS WITH TENANTS FORMING COOPERATIVES, FORMING TENANTS ASSOCIATIONS FIRST, STANDING AS ADVOCATES BESIDE THEM, NOT BUYING THE BUILDING, NOT TAKING OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE BUILDING, BUT BEING SUPPORT PEOPLE TO THEM, OPENING DOORS FOR THEM, STANDING BEFORE THE HALLS OF JUSTICE WITH THEM IN THEIR LEGAL FIGHTS, AND GENERALLY PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE OWNERS OF THE BUILDINGS."

NARR: EVEN THE MOST SKEPTICAL OBSERVERS OF THE JUBILEE HOUSING UNDERTAKINGS ARE REASSESSING THEIR OPINIONS. SIMILAR PROJECTS OF SUCCESSFUL COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS WITH PLANS TO ASSUME OWNERSHIP AND WITH A PROGRAM OF RENOVATION ARE FORMING IN OTHER SECTIONS OF THE CITY. JUBILEE'S VISION PROVED TO BE CONTAGIOUS.

ANNCR: THIS HAS BEEN DATELINE: WASHINGTON, D.C. -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE CAPITAL OF THE UNITED STATES, BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK AT THIS TIME. TODAY, YOU HEARD ABOUT THE JUBILEE HOUSING CORPORATION. NEXT                      ANOTHER DATELINE.

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